

VZCZCXRO0826
OO RUEHROV RUEHTRO
DE RUEHKH #0096/01 0181020
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O R 181019Z JAN 10
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0029
INFO IGAD COLLECTIVE
UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000096

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS
NSC FOR MGA VIN, LETIM
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PBTS](#) [KDEM](#) [KPKO](#) [MOPS](#) [SMIG](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: MISSEIRIYA MIGRATION BECOMING A CRISIS

REF: 09 KHARTOUM 862; 09 KHARTOUM 1389; KHARTOUM 54

11. (SBU) Summary: In a conversation with Poloff on January 12, Seth Kumi, United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) Civil Affairs Chief for Sector VI (Abyei), stated that many Misseriya are collecting in Abyei, unwilling to continue their southern migration. The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), attempting to enforce a zero-arms policy, is requiring that the Misseriya disarm before crossing into Southern Sudan, but the Misseriya are unwilling to do so under these conditions. UNMIS reported a clash in Unity State on January 11 in which two Misseriya were killed by SPLA forces after refusing to disarm. The current crisis increases the already high risk of violence in Abyei, jeopardizing sensitive national issues such as April elections, Abyei referendum preparations, and boundary demarcation. Post recommends that Washington support the long-proposed Five Governors Conference, bringing together executive leadership from Southern Kordofan, Unity, Warrap, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, and Abyei to create a unified security policy governing the Misseriya migration. End Summary.

Misseriya Collecting in Abyei

12. (SBU) Misseriya herders, making their annual dry-season migration south, and already in a high state of agitation over the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) ruling on Abyei, which they view as an unjust taking of their land (Refs A, B), are collecting in Abyei. The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), attempting to enforce a zero-arms policy, is requiring that the Misseriya be disarmed before they cross into Southern Sudan as part of their annual migration. In a conversation with Poloff on January 12, Seth Kumi, UNMIS Civil Affairs Chief Sector VI, stated that many Misseriya fear that the SPLA either cannot adequately protect their cattle or will steal the cattle for themselves, and are refusing to disarm in order to enter Southern Sudan. Kumi reports that many Misseriya have refused to proceed with the migration beyond Abyei, while others have returned to Abyei after facing SPLA soldiers in Southern Sudan. Kumi also reports that some heavily armed Misseriya-constituted People's Defense Forces (PDF) militia have been reported in Abyei. (Note: The SPLA's stated position on disarmament is consistent with that in prior years. Typically, however, the Misseriya and Dinka conduct a migration conference and arrive at a compromise by which the Misseriya are permitted to carry their weapons into Southern Sudan as long as they keep their weapons concealed and do not enter villages or towns armed. This year, due to political tensions, a migration conference did not take place. End Note.)

Two Misseriya Killed; Media Inflaming Tensions

13. (SBU) On January 12, local media reported that SPLA soldiers killed two Misseriya shepherds while they tended their sheep and injured others before fleeing the scene. The attack reportedly took place in the Abyei Special Administrative District, about 30 miles north of Abyei town. In a conversation with Poloff on January 13, David Raikow, Political Officer for UNMIS, stated that UNMIS had received an unconfirmed report from Misseriya tribesmen in the area that they had been harassed by SPLA soldiers and impeded in their migration south. However, no fighting or casualties were reported. (Note: It is unlikely that SPLA soldiers were so far north of Abyei town, though the forces could have been a southern affiliated militia. End Note.) UNMIS Military Affairs did report a Misseriya-SPLA clash in Unity State on January 11 in which two Misseriya were killed in a fire-fight with SPLA forces after refusing to disarm. (Note: It seems probable that the media

KHARTOUM 00000096 002 OF 002

source conflated the two incidents and added local rumors. The unfortunate result is a story that is extremely inflammatory. The editor-in-chief of the media source is President Bashir's uncle. End Note.)

14. (SBU) Comment: The dangers arising from the situation in Abyei are severe. An outbreak of violence in Abyei could be more destructive than that which occurred in 2008 because the Misseriya feel abandoned by the GoS and betrayed by the CPA and the PCA. Furthermore, April elections, referendum preparations, and boundary demarcation are all sensitive national issues and would all be seriously disrupted by any outbreak of violence.

15. (SBU) Comment Continued: If a solution is not found to the disarmament issue, many Misseriya cattle will not survive this dry season, which is especially arid and compounded by an insect infestation which killed the grass in the Misseriya's northern grazing lands, resulting in an early southern migration. In addition, the Misseriya cattle are already weak due to last year's failed migration resulting from fighting that took place in Abyei in 2008. If the Misseriya suffer significant losses of their cattle, this will weaken traditional Misseriya leadership, while strengthening Misseriya militia forces and armed youth who are more radical and for whom land ownership and border demarcation are paramount issues. Post recommends that Washington support the long-proposed Five Governors Conference, bringing together executive leadership from Southern Kordofan, Unity, Warrap, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, and Abyei to create a unified security policy governing the Misseriya migration. Alternatively or additionally, the quick formation of a joint or third-party security force to accompany Misseriya herds may be a solution to the impasse. End Comment.

WHITEHEAD